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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, April 9

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
April 11, 2006

Spent whole day at his official residence.

Prime Minister's schedule, April 10

09:51

Attended the National Spring Road Safety Campaign Central Convention held at an elementary school in Ebisu.

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10:55

Returned to Kantei.

11:29

Met with defense chief Nukaga, his deputy Moriya, and others in the presence of Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe and his deputy Futahashi.

15:57

Met with the Ethiopian Ambassador to Japan.

17:03

Met in the Diet building with DPJ President Ozawa, Vice President Kan, Secretary General Hatoyama, Diet Affairs Committee chief Watanabe, and others, in the presence of LDP Secretary General Takebe. Afterward, attended a party executive meeting.

17:49

Attended an IT Headquarters meeting at Kantei.

18:57

Returned to his residence.

4) US Assistant Secretary of State Hill turns down dialogue with Pyongyang; Individual talks continue between delegates to six-party talks

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)
April 11, 2006

Major chief delegates to the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions yesterday actively engaged in multilateral talks, such as meetings between China and South Korea, China and North Korea, and Japan and the US. Thus, they intensively discussed the issue of restarting the six-party talks, which have been suspended since last November. US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill was expected to arrive in Japan yesterday afternoon. The greatest focus of attention is whether US-North Korea talks will take place.

Hill categorically said at a Tokyo hotel, "Since Pyongyang insists on its position of boycotting the six-party talks, I will not meet with the North Korean delegate." He thus rejected talks with Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan, the delegate from North Korea.

Hill reiterated his intention not to hold a US-North Korea talks under the present circumstances, saying after a dinner meeting with the delegates from Japan and South Korea, "The point is whether North Korea will return to the six-party talks or not."

Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi yesterday told a press conference, "North Korea has not yet presented anything that

would allow us to take an optimistic view regarding restarting the six-party talks." He added, "There are no prospects for realizing US-North Korea talks." South Korean negotiator Chun Young Woo said, "The current situation is considerably difficult. I think all concerned parties need patience."

Kim bilaterally met with the chief delegates from Japan, South Korea, and China April 8-10. Prior to a dinner meeting with the Chinese delegate yesterday evening, he rejected the idea of

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restarting the six-party talks, noting, "I have no intention of taking part in the talks while the US financial sanctions are in place."

5) US chief delegate to six-party talks Hill strongly urges Pyongyang to return to negotiating table unconditionally

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
April 11, 2006

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, US chief delegate to the six-party talks, yesterday morning arrived at Narita Airport and told reporters: "It appears that North Korea has not yet decided whether to return to the six-party talks. At present, I have no plans to meet with the North Korean delegate." He thus strongly called on Pyongyang to unconditionally return to the six-party talks. Referring to the US financial sanctions on the North over its unlawful activities, Hill also stressed that the financial sanctions and the restarting of the talks are two separate issues. He said, "The North understands our position, and we understand their position."

North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan and Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei of China, which hosts the six-party talks, met in Tokyo yesterday evening. Prior to the meeting, Kim told reporters: We demand the sanctions be eased. We cannot take part in the talks as long as the sanctions are in place." He thus called for the settlement of the sanctions issue.

6) Full-scale maneuverings start between US, North Korea, to seek breakthrough on restarting six-party talks

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)
April 11, 2006

In an effort to reach a breakthrough on restarting the stalled six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear programs, negotiators gathered in Tokyo yesterday and started full-scale maneuverings. The United States has called on North Korea to unconditionally return to the negotiating table, while North Korea has urged the US to make concessions by resorting to every possible tactic. Whether the six-party talks will be resumed at an early date hinges on a crucial meeting between the US and North Korea.

The North Korean delegation, including Foreign Vice Minister Kim Kye Gwan, arrived in Japan on April 7. Responding to questions from reporters prior to a China-North Korea meeting yesterday, Kim said, "This is a good chance, so it would be nice for me to be able to meet (with US delegate Christopher Hill)," unexpectedly showing a flexible stance.

However, hearing that Hill had said: "North Korea's return to the six-party talks is the precondition for the US to hold a meeting with North Korea," his attitude completely changed. Kim stated: "(To resume the six-party talks), the US knows what it needs to do."

But North Korea's real desire is to negotiate directly with the US. With a meeting with Hill as his main purpose, Kim came to Tokyo.

Meanwhile, the US has maintained a consistent stance this time.

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Hill said: "I think there is nothing left to say to North Korea." Hill met with Kim in Beijing this January, and in March, a US-North Korea meeting was held in New York. "Despite such efforts, North Korea took no action." Such feelings can be detected from his words. Japanese and South Korean government officials have also urged North Korea to take a flexible stance, by telling North Korean delegates: "It would be difficult to bring about a US-North Korea meeting in Tokyo." Even so, the US also cannot give up on the six-party framework.

7) Japan, US, South Korea confirm cooperation for resuming six-party talks

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 1) (Full)
April 11, 2006

The chief delegates of Japan, the United States, and South Korea to the six-party talks on North Korean nuclear programs confirmed in a meeting last night in Tokyo that the three countries would call on North Korea to return to the negotiating table as early as possible. But the prospects for US-North Korea negotiations remain unclear, since the gulf has yet to be bridged between the US, which has called for a resumption of the talks without any conditions, and the North, which has insisted the US lift the financial sanctions on it before restarting them.

Attending last night's meeting were Kenichiro Sasae, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, and South Korean top envoy Chun Young Woo. After the meeting, Sasae stated, "The three countries will make efforts to have North Korea return to the negotiating table." Hill insisted that the six-party talks and the financial sanctions were two separate matters.

8) Japan urges North Korea to return to six-party talks; North rejects call, insisting on end to sanctions

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
April 11, 2006

Kenichiro Sasae, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, yesterday afternoon met with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan for about two hours at the annex of the Foreign Ministry's Azabudai Guest House. During the talks, Sasae urged North Korea to return to the six-party talks at an early date. However, Kim did not show any sign of responding to the call. Emerging from the meeting, Sasae told reporters, "There are at present no prospects for restarting the stalled six-party talks."

Yesterday's meeting between the two was the second, following the one on April 8. The meeting then focused on the abduction issue, but yesterday they discussed the nuclear issue.

The US had earlier announced that it had no intention of holding talks with Pyongyang unless it declares it will come back to the six-party talks. With this in mind, Sasae called on Kim to declare that North Korea would return to the negotiating table at an early date. However, Kim reportedly stuck to his usual position that as long as the US financial sanctions on Pyongyang remain in place, the North will not return to the six-party

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talks.

Sasae later met with US chief delegate Christopher Hill and chief South Korean delegate Chun Young Woo and held trilateral talks. The three negotiators reaffirmed their intention to work together in order to restart the six-party talks.

9) US president calls for improvement in Japan-China relations, Japan-South Korea ties

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 1) (Full)

April 11, 2006

Koji Maruya, Washington

US President George W. Bush delivered a speech on April 10 in Washington, in which he indicated that better relations between Japan and China and between Japan and South Korea were desirable. He expressed his hopes for the promotion of bilateral dialogue between Japan and China and between Japan and South Korea. He then revealed that the US would assist in promoting dialogue between the Asian countries.

Meetings between the top leaders of Japan and China have been suspended. President Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao are scheduled to meet in Washington on April 20. The expectation is that the strained Japan-China relations may become a topic of discussion in the planned US-China summit.

In his speech, Bush also expressed hopes that reform of the Chinese yuan would achieve results. He hailed an agreement between the Japanese government and Nago City on the relocation of the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station, stressing the move would strengthen Japan-US defense cooperation.

10) Suicide of Japanese diplomat at Consulate General in Shanghai: Cabinet Information Research Office's report that mentioned fear of leakage of official secrets did not reach prime minister

YOMIURI (Top play) (Lead paragraph)

April 11, 2006

A 46-year-old Japanese diplomat at the Consulate General in Shanghai committed suicide in May 2004. In order to get to the bottom of the incident, the Cabinet Information Research Office (CIRO) conducted an on-the-spot survey two months after the incident and compiled a report in which it said, "There is a chance that our country's official secrets were leaked." CIRO submitted the report to Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Masahiro Futahashi, according to information obtained by the Yomiuri Shimbun. The report concluded that behind the diplomat's suicide, there seemed to have been blackmail by China's State Security Ministry, and it urged the government to conduct a thorough probe into whether official secrets were leaked. But Prime Minister Koizumi had been left in the dark about the report for over a year and a half. There is a strong possibility that a bureaucrat in the Foreign Ministry decided not to verify whether diplomatic secrets were leaked. Crisis management in the Prime Minister's

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Official Residence is likely to draw criticism.

11) Japanese ruling coalition, Chinese Communist Party to resume

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exchanges in October

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)

April 11, 2006

Hidenao Nakagawa, chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Policy Research Council, held an informal meeting last night with Chinese Ambassador to Japan Wang Yi over dinner at a Tokyo restaurant. The two agreed to hold an exchange in October in Tokyo between Japan's ruling parties -- the LDP and New Komeito -- and the Chinese Communist Party. The last session was held in February in Beijing. The next meeting will likely be held after Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi steps down from office.

12) Prime minister, JDA chief affirm early settlement of Guam relocation cost issue

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)

April 11, 2006

Prime Minister Koizumi yesterday met at his office with Defense

Agency (JDA) Director-General Nukaga, and the two discussed Japan's share of the cost of the relocation of US Marines from Okinawa to Guam, a focal point in the ongoing consultations with the United States. Sharing the view that a reduction in Marines will help ease the burden on Okinawa Prefecture, as well as on Japan, and will also lead to enhancing the safety of Japan and regional security, Koizumi and Nukaga affirmed the government policy of striving to bring about an early settlement of the issue.

Late yesterday, Koizumi told reporters: "(I told Nukaga) that if you think of the need to alleviate the burden of military facilities on Okinawa, the importance of the Japan-US alliance, and Japan's national security, you will without fail reach a good conclusion. I'd like you to have close consultations on the issue."

Of the total cost of 10 billion dollars estimated by the US, Washington has asked Tokyo to pay 7.5 billion dollars, but Tokyo has insisted that its share of the cost should be limited to 3 billion dollars, including loans for the construction of housing and other facilities. Consultations have continued between the two countries. Japan is trying to reach an agreement with the US during the upcoming senior-working-level talks slated for April 13-14.

Nukaga yesterday emphasized the necessity of cost sharing in a speech in Nagoya: "Japan offered 1 trillion yen at the time of the Gulf War and is going to provide Iraq with 5 billion dollars. Given the need to lessen the Okinawa people's burden as quickly as possible, I think it is not mistaken to pay a portion of the relocation cost in accordance with our country's abilities."

13) Defense chief Nukaga indicates estimate of several hundred billion yen for relocating US Marines from Okinawa to Guam

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
April 11, 2006

Defense Agency Director General Fukushiro Nukaga stated yesterday in a speech delivered in Nagoya City, "Considering that Japan

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spent 1 trillion yen for the Gulf War and 500 billion yen for humanitarian assistance for Iraq, Okinawa's burden of US military bases should be reduced as quickly as possible." He indicated that the Japanese government estimated several hundred billion yen for the relocating of US Marines from Okinawa to Guam, a major issue in negotiations on the realignment of US forces in Japan.

Nukaga sought understanding from the audience for Japan's financial burden for the relocation of US Marines to Guam, saying, "(The relocation) will reduce Okinawa's and Japan's burden of US military bases. It is not wrong for Japan to bear its appropriate share." The Japanese and US governments will hold an intensive discussion on the issue in an April 13-14 meeting in Tokyo of their senior foreign and defense officials.

14) Cost of relocating US Marines to Guam; Government decides to pay over 30%; Japan's share to reach approximately 70%, including loans

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 1) (Full)
April 11, 2006

The government yesterday decided to approve direct outlays from the general account, a budget item financed with tax money, to share the costs of relocating US Marines in Okinawa to Guam in connection with USFJ realignment. It will convey to the US during bilateral working-level talks of officials responsible for foreign and defense affairs, which are to restart on April 13, that Japan is looking into the possibility of paying approximately 30% of the relocation cost from the general account. The focus will be on how the US will respond to this proposal, because it is calling on Japan to bear 75%.

Tokyo and Washington are aiming to reach a final agreement on USFJ realignment before the end of the month. The Japanese side wants to speed up negotiations by conveying to the US its readiness to pay its share directly from the general account, which it has never referred to in previous talks.

The number of US Marines to be transferred from Okinawa to Guam is approximately 17,000, including their family members. Japan's plan is to pay approximately 30% of the relocation cost from the general account and another 30% or so in loans, using the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, and to ask the US to pay for the remaining cost.

The US estimates the total amount of the relocation cost at approximately 10 billion dollars, of which it is urging Japan to pay 7.5 billion dollars. The US has presented the breakdown of the total amount as follows: 7.59 billion dollars for Marine Corps facilities, 940 million dollars for Navy and Air Force facilities, and 980 million dollars for off-base facilities. Japan will ask the US to reduce the total amount as well.

In previous talks with the US, Japan has proposed a plan to pay a total of approximately 3 billion dollars for the consolidation of housing facilities for the families of Marines, using a loan system. Direct payment from the general account will likely be mainly for the consolidation of daily-life-related infrastructure.

15) Government decides to bear 30% of Guam relocation cost to

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settle US force realignment issue before end of this month; Likely to steal attention in Diet in connection with fiscal reconstruction

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
April 11, 2006

The government has decided to earmark funds directly from the general account for the relocation of US Marines from Okinawa to Guam in a bid to settle the US force realignment issue before the end of this month. An agreement has also been reached with Nago, the relocation site for Futenma Air Station, on building two runways. The Guam relocation issue is now the only remaining high hurdle.

Japan has been avoiding mentioning its share of the relocation costs for two reasons. One is because the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement has no stipulation on financial support for US base facilities overseas, and the other is because the Finance Ministry has been reluctant to increase spending amid a heated debate on spending cuts as a condition for hiking the consumption tax.

At one point, some in the government had argued that Japan should bear 40% of the cost, but with Washington's estimate at 10 billion dollars, it has lowered Japan's share to slightly over 30%. Although Japan's direct share still remains fluid, the government's decision this time suggests that the stage has been set for a political settlement for a final decision on the US force realignment issue.

At the same time, the government has to fulfill its accountability to the public. Although Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has indicated that he has left the matter entirely to Defense Agency Director General Fukushiro Nukaga, direct disbursements from the general account may escalate into a topic of contention at the Diet between the ruling and opposition blocs.

It is the time for Koizumi to directly explain the need for US force realignment to the people to win their understanding.

16) Government eyes new cabinet decision on Futenma relocation; Cabinet meeting today to discuss Guam relocation cost

In order to make a cabinet decision after obtaining Okinawa Gov. Keiichi Inamine's understanding, the government intends to hold talks between Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and the governor, who is opposed to relocating Futenma Air Station to the coastline of Camp Schwab, after a US force realignment final report is produced by Japan and the US later this month.

Koizumi told reporters last night, "I would like to hold talks with Gov. Inamine to win his cooperation."

Appearing on an NHK program last night, Inamine also said:

"A time will definitely come for me to meet with the prime minister. At that point, I would like to discuss Okinawa's

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standpoint squarely. But it is not the time to see the prime minister."

The government made a cabinet decision in December 1999 based on the original Henoko offshore plan. The government wants to make a new cabinet decision overriding the 1999 decision after confirming Okinawa's base realignment and reduction blueprint in a final report and softening Inamine's stance.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, Foreign Minister Taro Aso, Defense Agency Director General Fukushiro Nukaga, and Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki are scheduled to hold talks this morning to discuss the relocation of US Marines from Okinawa to Guam. They will specifically discuss Japan's share of the relocation cost ahead of the April 13-14 Japan-US senior-working-level talks.

17) Defense Agency decides to build additional Futenma runway to accommodate just three planes

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Abridged)
April 11, 2006

The government has decided to build another runway at the Futenma Air Station relocation site at Camp Schwab to accommodate just three fixed-wing aircraft, a source revealed yesterday. Administrative Vice Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya admitted yesterday the costliness of the second runway, saying, "We are aware of the high cost for it."

A total of 12 KC-130 fixed-wing air tankers will be transferred from Futenma Air Station to mainland Japan. As a result, two C-12 small liaison planes and one T-39 will remain at Futenma.

Moriya said, "The helicopters (deployed at Futenma Air Station) will not fly over residential areas." He also revealed that the government has decided to build two runways in a V-shape to ensure that the fixed-wing planes will not pass over residential areas.

The construction of two runways is certain to delay the government's construction deadline of 2014 and increase the amount of reclaimed land needed. The new construction period and cost are unknown, according to the Defense Agency.

Both runways will be 1,800 meters long, including the overrun portions. The new airfield will become the second US base in Okinawa to have two runways, following Kadena Air Base.

18) JDA chief: Japan-US talks on US force realignment will enter an important phase in one or two weeks

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
April 11, 2006

Defense Agency (JDA) Director-General Fukushiro Nukaga yesterday afternoon delivered a speech in Nagoya, in which he mentioned

Japan-US talks on how to decide on Japan's share of the cost of relocating US Marines from Okinawa to Guam and indicated his intention to seek to finalize the talks as swiftly as possible. He then said: "The cost issue will become a major agenda item over next one or two weeks."

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19) Futenma relocation: Koizumi willing to meet, Inamine reluctant

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Abridged)
April 11, 2006

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has indicated that he would like to meet with Okinawa Prefecture's Governor Keiichi Inamine soon over the planned relocation of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to a coastal area of Camp Schwab in the island prefecture. "I hope that I can meet with the governor before long to talk about alleviating Okinawa's burden, developing Okinawa's economy, and the importance of the bilateral alliance between Japan and the United States," Koizumi told reporters at his office yesterday. The premier has so far been negative about meeting with the governor.

However, Inamine frowned on the idea of meeting with Koizumi at an early date. "We still cannot meet for now, I think," Inamine said on an NHK-TV news program yesterday evening. "We're now still coordinating issues, and I believe that the time will come for sure when we'll have to meet in that process," Inamine said, adding: "If the time has come, then I would like to state Okinawa's stance."

20) In interview, Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) head Ozawa states that Class-A war criminals were "not qualified to be honored at Yasukuni Shrine"

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Lead paragraph)
April 11, 2006

Minshuto President Ozawa, who assumed the top DPJ post, yesterday was interviewed by the Mainichi Shimbun at party headquarters. When asked about the enshrinement of Class-A war criminals at Yasukuni Shrine, Ozawa again gave a critical view: "From the beginning, they should not have been enshrined there. That's wrong." Referring to Class-A war criminals, he stated: "They told the Japanese people that you should die if you were taken prisoners. They, however, did not die and were held as prisoners. That's nonsense. They were not war dead and were not qualified to be honored at the shrine."

21) Poll: 56%, or 90% of Minshuto supporters, have expectations for Ozawa

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Excerpts)
April 11, 2006

A total of 56% of respondents have expectations, either fully or to some extent, for the new Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) head Ichiro Ozawa, while 40% do not expect much from him, according to a nationwide (interview) survey by the Yomiuri Shimbun on April 8-9. Among those who said they supported the largest opposition party, 90% said they expected much of Ozawa. Public support for Minshuto stood at 14.0%, up 2.9 points over the previous survey in March (11.1%).

Some 50% of respondents said they believed Ozawa had the ability to rebuild the party, while 43% gave a negative reply. Among Minshuto supporters, 76% said Ozawa would be able to resuscitate

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the party.

Asked if Minshuto has the ability to hold the reins of

government, 61% said they did not think Minshuto was capable of governing, while 30% said that they believed the party was equipped to take the reins of government. In a (telephone) survey in early April, just after former Maehara announced his intention to resign over a bogus e-mail scandal, 67% said "no," and 22% said, "yes." Asked about the policy stance the opposition party should take in future Diet sessions, 77% suggested a "stance of presenting counterproposals," while 16% called for a "confrontational stance."

22) Cabinet support inches up to 56 %

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
April 11, 2006

Public support for the Koizumi cabinet edged up 1.1 points to 56 %. The support rate of the Liberal Democratic Party rose 0.5 point to 42.8 %.

23) Poll: Public support for Ozawa-led Minshuto remains low; Abe stands out as top choice to succeed Koizumi

SANKEI (Top Play) (Excerpts)
April 11, 2006

Following Ichiro Ozawa's assumption of the post of Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) president, the Sankei Shimbun and FNN (Fuji News Network) conducted a joint survey on the current political situation on April 8-9. The poll found that 43.8% of respondents had expectations for the ability of the Ozawa-led Minshuto to hold the reins of government while 38.4% didn't. The support rate of Minshuto, though, stood at 17.4%, a distant second following the 42.1% for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Asked who is desirable as a successor to Prime Minister Koizumi, a whopping 47% chose Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, placing former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda a distant second with 18.3 %.

Support for the cabinet dropped below the previous survey (56.9 %) conducted just after the cabinet was reshuffled last November to 48.8 %, but the cabinet has enjoyed stable public support despite Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's announcement of his intention to resign this September.

SCHIEFFER